



St. Mary's Church of England Primary School, Putney

Vision: *Delivering excellence, allowing all to flourish*

Mission: *Creating a culture of wonder, guided by Christian faith*

Values: *Compassion • Endurance • Thankfulness*

Reception: Half-Termly Letter to Parents

Autumn Term 1, September 2021

Dear Parent(s) and Carer(s),

A big welcome to parents and children from the Reception staff at St Mary's!
We are looking forward to a wonderful year.



**WELCOME
TO SCHOOL**

We hope the Reception Handbook, and A-Z of Early Years documents in your induction pack will be helpful guides as queries arise. In addition we produce a class letter each half term, which fills you in on the learning going on each half term, and gives you important dates for your diary and ways in which you might be able to get involved if you wish to. The letter is available at the beginning of every half term on the website (class focus section) and is filled with important information - **it is really important to read and note the dates for your diary and information section - thank you in advance!**

The Reception Team

Our Year R team this year is:

Miss Amelia de Souza - full-time class teacher

Miss Jordan Maxwell Ridgway - full-time teaching assistant

On Tuesdays the class will be taught by specialist staff: Mrs Adams for Art and Design, and Mrs Le Prevost for Music. On Monday Reception will have PE with Coach Park.

Coronavirus Pandemic

The school continues to follow guidance from the Department for Education and at this present time we can return to a more 'normal' school life akin to prior the pandemic. This will no doubt be of great happiness, and we pray that any disruptions to education will be minimal. The school has updated its COVID-19 Risk Assessment to reflect the current guidance and this can be viewed on our school website here:

<http://www.stmarysschoolputney.co.uk/coronavirus-information/>

Safeguarding

Safeguarding the children at St. Mary's is the responsibility of all staff, parents and professionals who come on site. If you have a safeguarding concern, our Designated Safeguarding Lead in school is Mrs Kerry Dunford. Her contact email is: kdunford.212@lgflmail.org.

If there are safeguarding concerns, which take place outside of school hours please contact the Wandsworth Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Their contact details are: Telephone: 020 8871 6622 or e-mail: MASH@wandsworth.gov.uk.

The Curriculum

As you may be aware, a new Early Years Framework has come into effect from September this year, which is very exciting! Whilst the seven areas of learning remain the same, how they are broken down is slightly different, so you may see some new terminology if you were familiar with the old framework in a previous Nursery. At St Mary's we have amended and planned our Early Years' curriculum, to cover the new framework, leading up to the new Early Years Goals at the end of the Reception year. Much of the week by week learning will be similar to previous years, but with changes and additions, and in particular a real focus on the use of high-quality texts, development of vocabulary, particularly through books, and a focus on speaking and conversation throughout the curriculum.

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum covers a child's whole development across seven areas: Communication and Language; Physical Development; Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Literacy; Mathematics; Expressive Art and Design; and Understanding the World.

Each half term we choose a theme for our learning across all areas of the curriculum. The theme for our learning this half term is **Starting School and how to be a Reception Superhero!** We are talking about the behaviour expectations in our new class, and also are being introduced to different Characteristics of Effective Learning 'superheroes' who will help us to be superhero learners! These include Miss Fantastic Focus (concentration), Keep it Up Captain (keep trying), and Have a Go Hero (have a go at something tricky). Children have individual superhero sticker charts, which they can fill up with stickers gained from Reception superhero behaviour!

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

Our main focus for this half term is to settle the children into their new school environment. The class will be learning each other's names and begin to make friends by playing lots of 'getting to know you' circle times. We will be thinking together about what kind of Reception class we want to have, and setting up a 'class charter' together, with our class expectations on it. We will be spending a good period of time thinking about different emotions, so that children are able to name, and manage, their own feelings and those of others. We are doing this through exploring picture books, in particular "The Colour Monster" by Anna Llenas, (which I would highly recommend for home too) which equates a different colour with each emotion. We will then go onto "Ruby's Worry" by Tom Percival. Health and self-care is a big part of your child's personal development. We are encouraging the children to be increasingly independent. Reinforcing how to put jumpers and coats on independently at home is a huge help.

Physical Development (PD)

We will be working to develop the children's fine and gross motor skills, as they participate in a wide variety of games. We will also build their fine motor skills through repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with play dough, small construction, arts, crafts and using small tools. Building their strength in their upper body, hands and fingers will develop their pencil control. They will be encouraged to use a tripod grip (see picture to the right) when mark making and writing. Please continue to encourage this at home as they make marks, paint, draw and write.



PE lessons will be taught by Mr Kevin Park, one of our PE coaches, on Mondays, and by Miss de Souza on a Thursday. This half term we will focus on movement, including developing a range of movement patterns and responding to performing these on command. **Children should come into school on Mondays and Thursdays in their PE kit. They do not need a change of clothes.**

Communication and Language (C&L)

Children will be developing their listening, understanding and speaking skills. This is done across the school day, and through carpet sessions and circle times, where we encourage the class to increasingly interact with each other. Foci for this half term include encouraging children to express opinions, and ask appropriate questions of others, as well as using high quality picture books to develop children's comprehension, inference and retelling skills.

Literacy

At St. Mary's we follow the **Jolly Phonics Synthetic Phonics Program**, which uses a multi-sensory approach to teaching phonics. The class will be learning four letter sounds (phonemes) per week. Your child will bring home 'sound books' with the four sounds covered in class each week. **These will come home on Thursdays** (from 30th September). **Please ensure your child's reading folder is in school on this day.** Please practise recognising, saying, hearing and writing the sound of the letters at home. **Your child's reading will be really impacted by short, regular practice at home together, and we really recommend finding a time that works for you as a family for daily reading practice, even before reading books themselves start to come home.** It is expected that children will read aloud and/or practice their letter sounds every night for at least 15 minutes. As the children begin to blend and read, then word cards, tricky (sight) words, and books will begin to come home too. When this happens a separate letter/email will be sent home giving further details. Please don't worry if you haven't received books yet. We seek to ensure each child has a really secure foundation of various literacy skills before books go home, as moving onto books too early can hinder their overall progress.

It is really important that these letter sounds are said correctly by adults, and it is surprisingly hard! Sounds should be the sound, rather than the letter name, and they should usually be short. Please do take a look at these videos before you start practising with your child:

- This is a helpful guide to the sounds and Jolly Phonics - and particularly how to avoid the dreaded schwa!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVyry9jpVjI>
- This has a rundown of the correct pronunciation. It starts with the vowels, but the consonants are more marked - stay tuned! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqhXUW_v-1s

We will also be playing lots of sound discrimination games, both creating and hearing different sounds, as well as rhythm and rhyme, alliteration and oral blending/segmenting. These key skills form a firm foundation for reading.

Mathematics

In our number work we will be exploring what number and counting really is, and mastering these concepts. This half term we will be exploring the numbers to 5 deeply, understanding the composition of each number, building up one-to-one correspondence when counting, and developing subitising (recognising quantities without needing to count). We will compare quantities of objects, recognising when a quantity is greater than, less than or the same as another quantity. In our shape, space and measure work we will be sequencing exploring 3D and 2D shapes to develop spatial reasoning.

Understanding the World

The class will be getting to know each other, and talking about, and celebrating, similarities and differences between us. To help our learning here, **please send in a digital photo of you as a family to the class email address by Friday 24th September.** Children can share details of their life with this as a starting point.

RE

As a Church of England school we teach RE as a discrete subject. This term our weekly RE sessions will focus on "Who made this wonderful world?", as we learn more about the Bible, and what Christians believe about creation. They will be encouraged to think about the natural world around them.

Expressive Art and Design

In addition to our class based activities the class will also have discrete music and art lessons with a specialist teacher every Tuesday.

Art - Mrs Adams (will collect the children on Tuesday mornings):

We will be developing our drawing skills this half term. This term Reception will be introduced to drawing people. Everyone will also have the opportunity to create the templates for Christmas cards and mugs in time for half term.

Music - Mrs Le Prevost:

We will be developing musical understanding and participation through a range of activities to link in with their topic, including playing musical games, listening and moving to a range of music, and playing musical instruments. They will be introduced to the concept of pitch by using their hands and body in actions songs they know, as well as new songs that we will learn.

Reception Routines and Information

PE Arrangements and What Your Child Will Need

This year your child's PE lessons will take place every **Monday** and **Thursday**. **Children should come into school on Mondays and Thursdays in their St Mary's PE kit, and suitable footwear. They do not need a change of clothes.** Please ensure every item of your child's uniform is clearly labelled! We also spend lots of time outdoors, so please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather!

Children should also bring their book bag, containing their reading folder, into school every day. Please make sure you check the book bags every time they come home in case there are letters and important information for you. **We will add to the reading folders each Thursday.** Children should not bring any toys, books or food with them - we have everything they need.

Home Learning Arrangements

Over the year Reception will build up their home learning. Children's rectangular book bags should be brought into school every day, including their reading folder when this is issued to you.

We will be starting daily phonics and reading from Thursday 20th September - please see the Literacy section above for further details about how this works. It is expected that children will read aloud and/or practice their letter sounds every night for at least 15 minutes.

Later in the Autumn term the children will receive a weekly Handwriting sheet to complete at home, and in the Summer term children will also have a short dictation home learning task. When we start each of these we will send out further information.

Reception Baseline

You may already be aware that the government has introduced a start of school assessment to see how every child enters formal schooling, and will measure your child's progress from Reception to Year 6. This data is only used by the Department for Education, at the end of their time in Year 6, to provide a measure of, so you will be able to see how well their school has supported the year group over their time at primary school.

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short, interactive and practical assessment of your child's early literacy, communication, language and mathematics skills - it might sound scary, but in reality it isn't! Children will be just aware of doing two short games with the class teacher. It allows your teacher to spend quality 1:1 time with your child, getting to know them and seeing where each child is at allows us to plan our lessons to meet every child's needs. If you wish to read further about the RBA, you will find a useful parent booklet here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reception-baseline-assessment-information-for-parents>

Communication

If there are important messages e.g. a query for the Reception team, or letting us know about pick up arrangements **please email class2021@st-marys-putney.wandsworth.sch.uk before 9am: these will be checked once a day. A message after this should be phoned into the school office.** If the child is going home with someone not known to the Reception staff we must be notified in advance otherwise we cannot release your child until we have spoken to you. More information is in the Reception Handbook.

We will also send important information back via the email address. Please make sure this email address is saved so it does not go into your junk folder, and **please note any messages each night, as it may be about school the next day!**

Keep in the loop with social media

The school actively uses two social media platforms to communicate school news and events, so please check them out and follow us:

Twitter <https://twitter.com/PutneySMPS> Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/PutneySMPS/>

Contributing to your child's digital Early Years Learning Journey

We document your child's progress using an online tracking and assessment tool called the Early Excellence Assessment Tracker (EExAT). It is designed to capture key moments of your child's learning and development.

This system replaces paper scrapbooks. We ask you to also get involved by using EExAT to comment on photos and videos added by the Reception team, and upload photos and short videos of your child's learning and development from home via this online system. More details of how to set up your account, and how to add comments and photos will follow on email. **Please ensure you have returned the EExAT form sent out via email previously, so we are able to share your child's information.**

Admin

- Send in a **digital family photo** to the class email address (or paper if easier) by Friday 24th September.
- Ensure you have returned the **EExAT and FoSMs forms** as soon as possible
- Cookery, craft and gardening donation: Children take part in cookery, craft and gardening sessions throughout the year. **In order to cover the cost of ingredients, which add up very quickly, we would like to ask for a donation of £40 for the year in a clearly labelled envelope.** If you would prefer to donate for each half term in advance, then please do speak to me. Thank you so much in advance.
- Donations: If you are discarding any **old uniform** please consider donating them to the Early Years: we are very short on spare clothes!

We are really looking forward to a wonderful year in Reception, and to getting to know you and your child better. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to speak to us or to email me via the class email.

Best wishes

Amelia de Souza and Jordan Maxwell Ridgway